

Approved
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 7, 2016

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on March 7, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Bello, Hemmann, Hurley, Latina, Martino, Rell, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry and Mayor Montinieri.

Also present: Stephanie Askeland, Manager of Human Resources; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Spinella.

HEARING

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANTS.

No Public Comments - Hearing declared closed. Move to 2A General Comments – any topics.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue commented that we always say the pledge of allegiance to the flag and the last three words are “justice for all”, except for the people on Morrison Avenue. The only thing in common that Morrison Avenue has with Hillcrest Avenue is the intersection of Orchard with Hillcrest and Orchard with Morrison Avenue. By comparison: width of streets, Morrison is 24 ft. wide Hillcrest-30’. Snow shelf, Morrison -3ft, Hillcrest-15; drainage system, Morrison-none, Hillcrest-yes; Intersections: Morrison-2, Hillcrest –1. The list continues as to differences in the streets.

Rick Garrey of 35 Harding Street stated that they had their annual meeting of the Wethersfield Community Television Board. They wanted to remind everyone that they are still there. The studio is still available and they are looking for volunteers all the time. Whether it’s to do a TV show or film your child’s school play or sporting event; whatever it is, they are more than willing to put it on the air, help with editing and do whatever needs to be done. Also, while at the Community Center he noticed they retiled the senior wing and he thought it was a horrible job; he hoped we didn’t pay for it or that it will be redone. He thought the tile job itself isn’t very good; wax job is horrible and all the tiles are scratched up. It looks terrible and he doesn’t think it is right that we pay for these things.

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road stated that at the last Town Council meeting, Mayor Montinieri spoke about some of his comments. He stated the Mayor believes that all these Council members are totally committed and sincere and doing the best they can for the community. Mr. Young doesn’t know how that can be said given, we have had tax increases after tax increases. He doesn’t think it shows any consideration whatsoever for the citizens. There is not enough money to go around. We [our state] are in deep trouble and our taxes are going to go up. He suggested the new Council members stand out and fight that budget and reduce the budget.

George A. Ruhe of 956 Cloverdale Circle commented that he has a lot of concerns that scare him: unprecedented political environment all over the country at the federal level; incompetence and corruption at every level; and he senses a creeping police state mentality that scares him.

There is a pond next to his house and he suggests that if the Town was going to do something about it, now is the most opportune time. Not much is happening there because the evasive species have been cut back and the pond is clogged up. He keeps hoping that ultimately this thing will be addressed now while we have the opportunity. A major source of mosquitos just doesn't seem to be getting the appropriate attention it should. We can spend money on tennis courts but we can't fix a pond. He would like to suggest that this Council lean on the administrative people to get this particular job done.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Martino reported that Senior Citizen Advisory Commission met and discussed their upcoming May 12th event called KISS (Keep It Simple Seniors). Topics to be discussed at this event include: comparing electric suppliers to lower utility bills, solar panels - pros and cons, reverse mortgages - pros and cons and assisted living - pros and cons. It will be held at the Community Center and there will be vendors there to talk and advise our seniors on that. The Wethersfield Housing Authority advised that the apartments on Butler Street and the administrative building will be getting solar panels on them. They discussed senior activities being provided by the various churches in town and are scheduling mini trips to include the Bow Tie Theatre, Mark Twain House, Beardsley Zoo and Gillette Castle. The Budget and Finance Committee met and reviewed the Registrars of Voters salary, a housing authority payment in lieu of taxes on Highview Terrace, a Board of Education request to repurpose unspent capital improvement funds, reclassification of Derrick Solla from a Specialist I to Information Specialist II in Data Processing and a review of the High School Bond. Last week there was a conference call with Standard Emporium on bonding because we will be going out to bonding later this month and he wanted to commend our town staff: Town Manager, Jeff Bridges, Finance Director, Michael O'Neill and Town Planner, Peter Gillespie for a professional presentation that they put on which the underwriters were very impressed. They sent in questions in advance which our staff answered and got back to them in advance so that most of their questions were answered and they will be meeting later this week to give us a rating on those bonds going out. A great job to our staff for their presentation.

Councilor Spinella reported that the Memorial Day Parade Committee met and they are looking for potential speakers for the parade which will be on May 28th. The Youth Advisory Board met and they are putting together some different ideas for fund raisers to help some kids go to camp. They try to get about \$18,000 in this account to send multiple kids to camp.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Martino commented that on February 20th the Wethersfield Chapter of the Knights of Columbus celebrated their 60th anniversary with a dinner dance at Incarnation Church and he wishes them well and continued success in their charitable endeavors.

Councilor Latina commented that the 5th and 6th grade girl's travel basketball team won their championship for their league last year and this coming weekend SDMS will host the Final IV for the boys and girls, the older level league, play will happen. It's a great accomplishment and kudos to a lot of the kids in town.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bridges informed that there was a walk in item on the podium to introduce a Resolution for next meeting. It is a LoCIP Resolution to repave Dix Road. We need a Resolution to be able to access the State money and ask that it be added to the agenda. We are going to be selling the second series of bonds for the High School project March 16th. We will be selling 11 million dollars of bonds so we expect to have the results that day, with an interest rate and so forth and will report out when that bond sale is complete. We are still waiting on the rating from S&P. They delayed the committee meeting so we won't get the rating until tomorrow or Wednesday. The ISO which rates fire departments for insurance purposes has done a review and is maintaining a classification of 3 which is good for volunteer organizations. That is a good low rating for a fire department and maintains the 3 we had before and is positive for the community in terms of fire insurance mostly for commercial but it does help some on the residential side. We have recovered \$13,919 from our insurance on the cleanup of the damaged transformer on the high school property. About a year ago, one of the transformers got damaged and we spent about \$38,000 cleaning it up including cleaning up Folly Brook a little bit. The town did receive again for the second year in a row the distinguished Budget Award from the Government Finance Officers Association. We do receive the annual award for financial reporting for probably 15 years running but last year Mike O'Neill submitted the budget to GFOA for review where we got the Budget Presentation Award for last year and this year. Kudos to the Finance Department.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATION

On March 22nd we will know the order of the candidates for the presidential preference primary on April 26th. Absentee ballots will be available on April 5th.

Councilor Bello moved to **"ADD TO AGENDA TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING DATE OF MARCH 21, 2016 FOR THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT TO OBTAIN LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS TO RECONSTRUCT AND PAVING OF DIX ROAD BETWEEN WOLCOTT HILL ROAD AND RIDGE ROAD"**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

COUNCIL ACTION

Councilor Martino moved **"TO ACCEPT THE DEMOCRATIC APPOINTMENTS OF DAN A. SILVER (ALTERNATE) FOR A TERM OF 3-7-16 TO 6-30-19 TO THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION AND CINDY CLANCY FOR A TERM OF 3-7-16 TO 6-30-19 TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (CRCOG) REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANTS"**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Town Manager Bridges indicated that Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) works regionally with the 18+ towns in the CRCOG region on certain projects. These four are the projects that Wethersfield will participate in. The newest project and the one that has some significant financial potential impact for the town is the Stop Loss Captive. A group of towns are coming together to purchase collaboratively stop loss insurance for self-insured health insurance. Mike O'Neil has been working with

this group on our behalf. At a certain pooling point on every medical claim, the town stops paying the claim and a reinsurance company then picks it up. For Wethersfield our pooling point is \$125,000 and there are towns in this collaborative that have a pooling point of half a million dollars. This particular grant is to provide seed money for the group to put in reserve against potential losses and then we would participate with the other dozen towns. It would evolve to be something like CIRMA which does our liability and worker's comp insurance. The Code Enforcement Software, the Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory and the Call Handling and Response Triage are the other projects that we would support.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Bello moved **“TO RECLASSIFY DERRICK SOLLA, INFORMATION SPECIALIST I TO INFORMATION SPECIALIST II EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Town Manager Bridges explained that as they worked through the Shared Services process for merging the IT departments they left a vacancy in the town side in anticipation of reallocating those resources and that personnel to the Shared Services effort. During that time, Mr. Solla has probably done more work as an IT Specialist II, more sophisticated work, less of the entry level work between him and Tom Hemphill who is the other IT Specialist we have on the town side. So given that and how we evolve into the Shared Services, it appropriate at this time to reclassify Derrick as a Specialist II since he is doing the work as a Specialist II and it is also part of an agreement that we have with the union for some relief we get under the contract as we move forward under Shared Services.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Spinella moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LOCAL 818”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Town Bridges stated that this is the follow up where the Union has agreed to release this position, formerly department head, from the Union as part of the Shared Services process.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Spinella moved **“TO ACCEPT COOPER WELLNESS AS THE THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR AND THE COSTS TO BE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TOWN AND BOARD OF EDUCATION BASED UPON THE NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS (EMPLOYEES) PARTICIPATING”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

Town Manager Bridges stated that most of our Union contracts now require the employees to participate in a wellness program which is basically a menu of items depending upon your age and your gender on certain tasks or medical procedures, processes and tests you should do each year to maintain healthy living. The Board has instituted it for several years and we now have a critical mass where we can bring enough employees on but one of the things we have found is the administration of this is a high maintenance type thing because you have to make sure everybody does it and if they don't do it you change their insurance and there is a penalty if you don't participate effectively so Chris Monroe, our agent of record, has worked with town staff and put it through the insurance committee that we hire

Cooper Wellness to administer the program. Not only does it provide the people to administer it and make sure it get done but it also provides that separation between the employer and the employee on certain health related matters. It provides that privacy and that buffer for some things and it's not very expensive overall considering what other options we have so we recommend Cooper Wellness.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **“TO TABLE THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO UTILIZE UNSPENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS FOR ADDITIONAL SECURITY CAMERAS”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Deputy Mayor Barry indicated that this would be utilizing money from the Capital Improvement Fund that had not been used for past projects on security cameras in all the elementary schools. Silas Deane had already been part of the CIAC budget for this year as well. Absolutely in favor of the security cameras but the amount that is being sought is pre-bid and hasn't gone out to bid yet and the amount seems high so we would like to get a number on that before we actually authorize spending the full \$50,000 on each camera. It may come out to that number but given the fact that some projects have come in under budget and we would like to know what they come out to bid on and we would like to get this done this summer but it has to be for the right price as well.

Councilor Hurley commented that The Board of Education has not had a look at this which he thought they had. In the future he suggested that we should check to make sure it went to their meeting and gets approved from them first.

Councilor Hemmann indicated that they passed the policy at the end of last year related to spending and they narrowed the focus so that over \$25,000 needs Board approval.

Vote: After discussion, all Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Bello moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN CLERK TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANT FOR PUBLIC DOCUMENTATION MANAGEMENT”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Town Clerk Sassano stated that we collect money for the state on every land transaction that we have in town. We send it to the State Library and the Public Records Administrator knows how much it costs to maintain our records and has generated maybe ten-twelve years ago now the process in which some of it we can get our money back if we ask for some of it. They have certain levels and we qualify for \$5,000 this year. It's a targeted grant and has to be used for records in the vault and throughout town which she uses for all the departments. A few years they use to have competitive grants in which we got \$45,000 and we have gotten that about three times and they no longer offer that now so they just let us get a minimum back.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor Martino moved **“TO ACCEPT THE DIESEL FUEL CONTRACT FROM DIME OIL COMPANY FOR JULY 1, 2016 TO JUNE 30, 2017 FOR \$1.3786 PER GALLON”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Town Manager Bridges explained that CRCOG bid the diesel for the year. The Town and the Board of Education combined purchased approximately 85,000 gallons of diesel a year. Our current price is \$2.12. This is significant savings.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT TO OBTAIN LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS TO RECONSTRUCT AND PAVING OF DIX ROAD BETWEEN WOLCOTT HILL ROAD AND RIDGE ROAD.

MINUTES

Councilor Bello moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2016”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue commented that it's sad to hear that every time the town does some work it seems that something goes wrong. Is there any accountability? Either we are incompetent or we don't care but both of them are bad. It reminds him of when the construction of the sidewalk on Morrison Avenue. How is he supposed to grow grass in that area when there is no topsoil underneath, three feet - no topsoil – a good hot summer day, everything dies. Did anybody check the job and why did he have to call or bring it up. How many times does it happen in town and it doesn't get caught. There is a pothole at the end of Morrison Avenue and it has been there for years. Every time it gets fixed, the pothole comes back – why, because it's not done properly. Either they are incompetent or they don't care.

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road commented that he agrees with Mr. Colantonio and Mr. Garrey. He and Mr. Colantonio come to a lot of the meetings here. He doesn't see why you don't give Mr. Colantonio a sign that will make his neighborhood safer. It's nice to get awards but we are paying members to some of these organizations; and he thinks there's a conflict. The former chair of the Charter Revision Commission has been appointed to Planning & Zoning. The new building lots are being planned on Old Reservoir Road. It seems to be nothing but a swamp that ends up where they now will put a road. He can't believe that they allowed that. Do we have a grand list yet? That should be extremely high with all the business activity. Other towns are reporting and he would like to hear about Wethersfield. We have a Housing Authority. With the money you collect, why aren't they funding their own business? Why do we have to give them money? Why isn't the Historic Society taking care of their own? It doesn't matter if we are talking about Wethersfield or the State of Connecticut. The only difference between us is that when we borrow money, the Town of Wethersfield has to pay it back.

George Ruhe of 956 Cloverdale Circle commented on the coming election. He has observed a change in the method in checking in to vote. The sheets use to be on a big table and they would highlight the names as people check in. Now there is a loose-leaf binder so when you go up and give your address people are fumbling through pages for your name. The signing in process is very time consuming. In the summer it might not make a lot of difference, but the fall election, it could. He thinks it is a good idea to think about that. He would like to encourage the Council have office hours again. He was a little uncomfortable speaking during a coffee hour, with others present. He thinks a good environment like right here at Town

Hall with coffee and doughnuts that's not a bad idea. He commented on a procedural perspective to table, but at least everybody was on the same page and the end result was the same. He was looking at a house for sale in his neighborhood and in their garage, was a great big stop sign and it reminded him of Gus.

Councilor Spinella moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Councilor Bello.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Martino moved **“TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION”**, at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Vote: All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:45 p.m., Councilor Bello moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Martino. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
March 21, 2016